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IN MEMORIAM: PHILIP LUTLEY SCLATER.¹

Born 4th Nov., 1829 — Died, 27th June, 1913.

BY D. G. ELLIOT, D. SC., F. R. S. E., &c.

Plate I.

A PRINCE in the realm of Zoological Science has fallen, and I am called here today to bid you look upon his face, and hearken to the records of his deeds. Death, whom the Poet has called "The Beautiful Angel," has in recent years frequently visited within our ranks, and many and wide are the gaps he has made, until the brilliant cohort that embraced all of our noblest and best, is now shattered and dispersed, leaving of its talented members, but a sorrowing remnant, survivors of a glorious host.

Of all those who did brilliant work during the past sixty years, and whose familiar places know them now no more, it would seem almost invidious to select by name any particular member of that celebrated company, which made the middle and latter part of the last century glorious in our annals, a few survivors of whom even extending its renown into the opening of this one, which we have been privileged to witness.

But high as is the rank in our science which we willingly accord to many of that distinguished band, and which was one of the glories of the Victorian Era, yet there was one who occupied a

¹ Address delivered 11th November, 1913, at the thirty-first stated meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union.

commanding position, whose name was known wherever in the world the study of ornithology held a place, and whose labors were persistent and never ceasing over a period longer than that allotted to the majority of mankind, and Philip Lutley Selater has long been recognized as one of the great leaders and exponents of our science.

He was born on the 4th of November, 1829, at Tangier Park, in Hampshire, the country residence of his father, William Lutley Selater, Esq., and his boyhood was passed at "Haddington House," another of his father's estates, and there, in the celebrated locality sacred to the memory of Gilbert White of Selborne, he fostered his taste, and love for the study of birds. I say fostered intentionally, for I believe an ornithologist or naturalist, like the poet, must be born and not made, and if he has not the "Divine Afflatus," his labors will be but fitful, lacking the soul, and his spasmodic efforts will come to naught. But our friend was born to the 'Purple,' his lineage was true, and in the pursuit of his loved birds, he gave action and expression to the spirit that was in him.

At ten years of age he was sent to a famous school at Twyford near Winchester and when thirteen years old he went to Winchester College and three years later became a scholar of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, but being under age he did not become a resident at the University until 1846. At that time Strickland was a reader in geology at the University and he was Selater's instructor in scientific ornithology, and here he began his collection of bird skins, at first confining himself to those species found in the British Isles.

In 1849 he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and he continued for two more years at the University devoting himself to the study of natural history and modern languages, and became familiar with French, German and Italian. In 1851, he began the study of law, and became a student of Lincoln's Inn, and in 1855 he was admitted a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, and was also called to the bar, and followed the Western Circuit for several years.

In 1856 he made his first visit to America, going west as far as Lake Superior and the upper waters of the St. Croix, which river he descended in a canoe to the Mississippi, and later published an account of his journey in the third volume of "Illustrated Travels."

In Philadelphia he met at the Academy of Natural Sciences, Baird, Cassin, Leidy, and other well known scientists, and passed considerable time studying the splendid collection of birds possessed by that Institution.

Returning to England he remained for several years in London practicing law and studying natural history, and was a constant attendant at the meetings of the Zoological Society.

Nearly twice the number of years allotted to a generation of mankind has passed away, since Sclater and I first met. It was in London, where I had come from Paris, after a considerable stay upon the continent studying in the various museums, and preparing the Monograph of the Pittas. On going to the house to which I was directed, quite an unpretentious one as I remember it, I ascended two flights of stairs after entering, and knocked at the door of a room which was opened by Sclater himself, and on giving my name was greeted with a cordial "Come in, come in, there are a few of us here talking about birds, come and join us." I found there a small company of young men, the names of most of whom have since become known wherever ornithology holds its sway, and there were laid the foundations of many friendships which death has alone terminated. I brought an account of Mitchell's death in Paris, Sclater's predecessor in the office of Secretary of the Zoological Society, rumors of which had reached London, but no details. Mitchell had resigned, and Sclater had been nominated for the office by Owen and Yarrell, and elected in the previous April. He had only just entered upon his duties, and he found the publications of the Society much behind in their regular issue, the state of the Gardens not what it should be, and many reforms needed, which during the next three years were established, and put into effect, and the "Proceedings" and "Transactions" brought up to date. At that time Sclater was tall and slender, with an attractive smile and cordial manner. He remained the most active power and influential officer of the Society for fifty years, and under his leadership it was raised to the first rank in dignity and usefulness, among the kindred institutions of the world, as well as in the importance and beauty of its publications.

Although when Sclater commenced to make his collection of bird skins at Oxford, he intended not to restrict himself to any one

country, but to include the birds of the world, he soon found this would be too great an undertaking, and he decided to confine his investigations to the avifaunas of Central and South America, and it was in those regions the greater part of his work was accomplished. But of course, as secretary of a society which carried on its works practically over the entire world, he was led to investigate from time to time families and species far removed from his chosen field of labor, and he published important papers and memoirs on mammals and birds of Asia and Africa and other eastern lands.

In 1858 he published his scheme for the six great geographical divisions of the earth. These were the Nearctic — including Greenland, and all North America and the northern half of Mexico; Neotropical — southern half of Mexico, West Indies Islands, Central America, and South America, with the Falkland and Galapagos Islands; Palaearctic — all Africa north of the Atlas Mountains, Europe, Asia Minor, Persia, Asia north of the Himalayas, northern China, Japan and Aleutian Islands; Ethiopian — Africa, south of the Atlas range, Madagascar, Bourbon, Socotra and Arabia to the Persian Gulf; Indian — India, Ceylon, Burma, Malacca, Asia south of the Himalayas, south China, Philippines, Borneo, Java, Sumatra and adjacent islands; Australian — Papua, Australia, Tasmania and the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

This arrangement was at once accepted as one admirably conceived, and for generalizing a geographical distribution on a broad scale it will remain as evidence of Sclater's skill and foresight in establishing the natural boundaries of birds upon the earth.

I read not long ago in one of our metropolitan dailies, in a short notice of Sclater's career, after mentioning this arrangement proposed by him, it stated that "it was said, he paved the way for Darwin." This, of course, was merely a layman's short-sighted view, and no one would be more quick to decline the honor than Sclater himself, for no one paved the way for the great investigator, he hewed his own road, and no man was ever able to walk abreast with him upon it, save one alone, Wallace.

The meetings of the Society, which were held twice a month except in summer, during the period Sclater was Secretary, were most interesting, and in the sixties and seventies of the last century, when I resided abroad, I was usually present, indeed at one time

I was a member of the Publication Committee. The number of eminent naturalists present on those evenings was marvellous, and no such body of celebrated men, all members of one Zoological Society had ever before been assembled together, and we may believe it will be a long time before one equal to it will be again seen, for it was the height of zoological activity in the world, when indeed there were giants in the land. Listen to the roll of those meetings so you may know who were the leaders at that time in Europe in the various branches of natural science, and as I call their names, no response comes to my ear, save the sound of the funeral bell tolling for those who have passed away.

I begin with the ornithologists, some of whom, however were equally great in other branches of science. *Philip Lutley Selater*, and *Osbert Salvin*, devoted friends, co-laborers in a large number of most important papers, synopses and volumes treating of the birds of the Neotropical Region. *Alfred Newton*, steadfast friend and charming companion, who published comparatively little during his career but was probably better versed in ornithological lore than any man of his time, and who will be remembered by the *Ootheca Wolleyana*, and the *Dictionary of Birds*. *John Gould*, famous for the great series of splendidly illustrated volumes. *Richard Bowdler Sharpe*, at that time the Librarian of the Society, but afterward head of the Department of Birds in the British Museum, and whose enduring monument will be that great Catalogue of Birds founded upon the unrivalled collection in that institution. *George E. Shelley*, author of the *Birds of Egypt*, *Monograph of the Sun Birds*, beautiful representatives in their metallic plumage, of our fairy Hummers, and the great work on the *Birds of Africa*. *Lord Lilford* known for his beautiful illustrations of *British Birds*. *Henry Seebohm*, explorer of the desolate Tundras of far away Siberia, author of "*British Birds*," "*The Charadriidæ*" and other works. *John Henry Gurney*, during his life time the great authority on raptorial birds. *Henry E. Dresser*, author of the great work on the *Birds of the western Palaearctic Region*, and other works. *Henry B. Tristram*, Canon of Durham, and whose name brings to our minds the feathered inhabitants of the sacred land of Palestine, deserted and stricken Moab, and the thirst lands lying along and upon the placid waters of the Sea of Death. *Edgar Leopold Leyard*,

talented brother of the illustrious discover of Nineveh, who brought with him the breath of the South African veldt, and the knowledge of the feathered creatures that wing their way over its wide expanses, as his work on the birds of that region proved. *Robert Swinhoe*, modest of mien, handsome of face, versed in the birds of China and far distant Formosa. *Arthur Penrhyn*, better known as Viscount Walden, and later as the Marquis of Tweeddale, and whose voluminous papers on the birds of the Philippine Islands and those of other eastern lands are well known. *Howard Saunders*, master of the long winged skimmers of the seas, of continental coasts, and the shores of the far flung islands of the main. *Frederic Ducane Godman*, chief editor and co-author with *Osbert Salvin* of the colossal work on the natural history of Central America, the "Biologia Centrali Americana." Then there rises before me the majestic figure with the lion-like head covered with silvered hair and lengthened beard of *Edward Blyth*, whose mind was stored with the knowledge of the birds and quadrupeds of India and other eastern lands, and his colleague and coworker in the same fields *Dr. T. C. Jerdon Alston*, already bearing in his delicate form the seeds of the complaint that cut all too soon his promising career. At times there would be present celebrated ornithologists from the Continent and during the French and German war *Jules P. Verreaux* left his native city, Paris, on the advent of the German army, and came to London and occupied Sclater's private room in the library building, which had been courteously placed at his disposal. Besides these there were others not strictly ornithologists, but very eminent in their various chosen fields of work. *Sir Richard Owen*, with his elaborate contributions on the great *Dinornis*, the extinct giant birds of New Zealand. *Sir William Henry Flower*, great compare anatomist, and later joint author with *Lydekker* of "Animals Living and Extinct." *Thomas Huxley* and *William Kitchen Parker*, world widely known, and *St. George Mivart*, celebrated with the two others just named for their intimate knowledge of animal anatomy. Then we recognize *Garrod*, *Forbes* and *Murie*, successive prosecutors of the Garden, and whose many and elaborate papers shed a flood of light upon the affinities, and their proper places in classifications of the animals submitted to their scalpels.

The artists were represented: there came *Joseph Wolf* with his

gentle ways and pleasant face, the greatest animal draughtsman and painter of any age, and Keulemans, happy in his skill for delineating birds. I do not remember ever to have seen at those meetings either John Edward or George Robert Gray, but the former's physical disability which constrained him to move about in a rolling chair was sufficient to explain his absence, but I know of no reason why George Robert should not have been present, nor did I ever see there, either Darwin or Wallace. It may have been that as they lived out of London, it was not convenient for them to come into town at night, but both those eminent men were frequently in the library during the day and I have often been with them on those occasions, Darwin seeking information on some particular subject he was then investigating, demanding facts not theories, for which he did not seem to have any particular use.

Those were interesting meetings, and at times the discussions were very lively, and those whose mental artillery was not of the requisite weight had best keep away from the arena.

That was a glorious company of eminent men, broad-minded and far-seeing, whose field of labor was as wide as the world, untrammelled by the artificial, oft changing boundaries of States, Principalities or Powers.

And where now are all those brilliant souls! They have passed over the threshold of that shining portal, through which all the living have seen at times many of those they loved and cherished, vanish from tear dimmed eyes, for, of all those whose names I have mentioned, but two remain with us today, Dresser and Godman long passed the number of years allotted to men upon the earth. The survivors of those meetings stand like lone columns, erect, lifting their heads aloft on a wide deserted plain, surrounded on every side by ruins, and when in thought I sweep aside the intervening years and stand again in that once crowded room, and look on row upon row of vacant chairs, which now no man can fill, the heart yearns with a fervent longing for

"A touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still."

On the establishment of the Ibis in 1859, the members of the British Ornithologists' Union, of which Sclater was a founder,

selected him as its first editor, and he continued in the office for six years, when he was succeeded for a similar period by Alfred Newton, followed by Osbert Salvin, who was the editor for the next six volumes, composing the third series. Then Sclater again became one of the staff, and he remained either sole editor or associate editor up to the beginning of the last year of his life.

It would seem that his constant work as Secretary of the Zoological Society, in connection with the publication of his numerous papers and volumes that were constantly appearing, would have been quite sufficient for him, without assuming the responsibility and labor attached to the publication of an important journal, but his capacity for work seemed unlimited, and he associated himself with Sharpe in establishing the British Ornithologists' Club, and usually presided at the meetings, and delivered an address at the beginning of the season. I have been his guest a number of times at the annual dinner, and of course sat at his side, and he was always a dignified presiding officer, of courteous demeanor. He appeared to delight in work, and once he told me that there never was a time when his pockets were not full of proofs requiring reading and correcting, and wherever he went, all his spare moments were occupied in this to most of us, wearisome and distasteful labor.

He became a member of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1847, and was Secretary of Section D. for a number of years, and ultimately its President in 1875, and delivered an address, taking for his subject, "The present state of our knowledge of geographical zoology," and in the succeeding year was elected one of the two general Secretaries, and served for five years, when he became ex-officio a member of the council.

In 1874 he served as private secretary to his brother the Right Hon. George Sclater-Booth, M. P., afterwards Lord Basing, who was president of the local government board, and served for two years, and was offered a permanent position in the civil service, which he declined as he would not give up his natural history work.

The library of the Zoological Society is greatly indebted to Sclater's knowledge of works bearing on that science, and to his activity in procuring the needed additions to make it complete. Every newly published work of merit was obtained as soon as possible after it was issued from the press, and there is no place

in the world where a naturalist depending upon books to aid him in his investigations can more easily and satisfactorily accomplish the completion of his labor.

In 1884 Sclater came to America for the second time, the reason being the meeting of the British Association that year in Montreal, and he was present at one of the early meetings of the American Ornithologists' Union. I saw much of him during his stay in New York at that time. He did no scientific work on this trip, but met many of his old friends and made the acquaintance of a number of those whom heretofore he had known only by reputation.

Sclater's position as Secretary of the Zoological Society gave him great opportunities for seeing and acquiring specimens of birds and mammals, and other zoological material.

His office at 11 Hanover Square, was the general meeting place of all naturalists in London, whether residents or visitors, and he was in constant correspondence with all those who were interested in natural science in every part of the world. Consequently material poured in upon him from all quarters, and his opportunities for discovering new forms were equalled by few and surpassed by none. It is not surprising therefore that those he supplied with names amounted to considerably over a thousand, and his papers on many scientific subjects to something like fifteen hundred.

Although ornithology was his chief study, he did a large amount of work in mammalogy, and he made important contributions to the families of the Deer, and Rhinoceros, and on various genera of American and African Monkeys. His published works of which he was the sole author or in co-operation with others, amounted to nearly thirty, of which, in mammalogy the most important was "The Book of Antelopes," by Sclater and Thomas, in four volumes containing descriptions of all the known species, and life histories so far as known, and 100 colored plates of many forms; and in birds, perhaps, "The Exotic Ornithology" by Sclater and Salvin, issued in large and small folio, with one hundred colored plates of birds of the Neotropical Regions.

Sclater was an indefatigable worker, never seeming to grow weary, and no one with any less powers for continuing steadily at his task for long periods could have possibly accomplished as much as he did, even in the course of an equal number of years.

He contributed Volumes XIII, XIV and XV of the "Catalogue of Birds," published by the British Museum, and he was co-author with W. H. Hudson in a work on "Argentine Ornithology," a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the birds of that southern land. Indeed in almost any field of ornithology which has been investigated during the past half century, Sclater's ceaseless activities are manifested and he has impressed his vigorous personality upon the scientific literature of his time. He was above all a systematic naturalist, most conservative in his methods and beliefs, and never was reconciled to the introduction of trinominals, adhering tenaciously, as did many of his contemporaries to the Linnean system of binominals. He loved the old ways, and looked askance and with suspicion upon 'innovations.'

Naturally one who was so well known far and wide, and who had done so much valuable scientific work, should receive many honors, and have his name enrolled among the members of many Societies. I have neither the time or space to enumerate them, suffice to state, that he was an Honorary Member of nineteen, Corresponding Member of thirteen, Member of ten, and Fellow of three of the scientific societies of the world, altogether a varied membership in forty-five, and I may probably have missed some.

During the greater part of his career he had continued to add to his collection of birds, and in 1886, when it had amounted to nearly nine thousand specimens of over three thousand species, he transferred it to the British Museum, whose collection augmented at about the same time, by those of Gould, Salvin and Godman, Hume, and others, became unrivaled in the world. After Sclater had ceased to be Secretary of the Zoological Society, he published comparatively little, and once I said to him that I thought he must feel lonesome now freed as he was from his many official duties, he quickly replied, "not at all, why should I be, I ride to hounds several times a week, and I have 'The Ibis' which keeps me pretty busy, and really I do not seem to have any spare time at all."

When I went to Africa in 1896, on arriving in London, the first person I consulted regarding my expedition was my old friend, then Secretary of the Society. I told him I proposed to go through Mashonaland into the countries beyond along the line of the Zambesi, by way of Beira. He pointed out the imminence of the war

with the Matabili the greatest fighting tribe in Africa, and which soon after broke out and devastated all that region and he asked me what I would do to protect myself and train, against a hostile nation in arms. I saw the point and replied, "Very well I will go through Masailand," a territory then little known or traversed, by way of Zanzibar and Mombasa, but he strongly opposed this idea, for it so happened he was then in constant correspondence with that particular part of Africa, as his third son, Guy Lutley Sclater was an officer in the Royal Engineers and was then engaged in the construction of the railroad from Mombasa, which eventually reached the shores of the Victoria Nyanza. He told me there was great unrest among the tribes, that the rhinder-pest had nearly destroyed the natives' cattle, and had made serious inroads among the bovine Antelopes; that fever was prevalent and severe along the line of the road, which proved unhappily too true, for his son died of an attack of it, before I returned to England; and he suggested I should go through Somali-land, into the countries beyond, north of the equator, and this I subsequently did.

I only saw Sclater a few times after he left the service of the Society. He was then living at Odiham Priory, about forty miles from London, and on each occasion, he came up to town to see me. Although it had been some years since we last met, in the first interview, I saw but little change in him. He was still active, both physically and mentally, took as much interest in natural science as ever, and he told me in the course of conversation, that he still rode to hounds once or twice a week. A few years after, I was again in London, working daily in the British Museum on the Primates, and he came again to see me, this time however, accompanied by his eldest son William Lutley Sclater, and I thought I saw a change. He was not so erect, nor so physically active, and when he entered my room, he seemed weary, and it was evidently a relief for him to be seated. But his mind was as clear and active as ever, and during his visit he asked many questions about my work, in which he took great interest, for he had written a good deal on the Primates himself in the years gone by; but when he rose and took my hand to say good-bye, I felt it was a final parting, as I was soon to leave England, and as he passed towards the door, I said in a low tone to his son who had lingered behind, "take care of your

father, he is not nearly so strong as he was," and my old friend passed out of my sight on earth forever. A few more years were to pass swiftly by, and the summons came to cease all earthly labor. The energetic toiler was still arrayed in the panoply of work, which he had carried so well over such a long series of years, his faith had not abated, nor his courage failed, and he still grasped in his aged hands, his familiar weapons the pen and the book, which he had wielded so long and so effectively. But the time had come when he was to "cease from his labors, and his works were to follow him."

The day was drawing to its close in the beautiful month of June, and peace like a blessing from another world, seemed to hover over the land, and Nature rejoiced in her smiling fields, and the opened buds and blossoms; the sun was slowly sinking to its rest behind the western hills, flooding the fleecy clouds floating in the blue vault above with crimson and with gold; from the east, the shadow of the coming night was creeping slowly, slowly onward, casting a pall over the valleys; the evening breeze with its soft breath was playing among the leaves, and calling forth the perfume of the flowers, and the nightingales, in their own fair land, chief minstrels of the feathered choir, had sounded in one great burst of melody, the opening chords of the vesper hymn,—when there came to our friend, waiting, ever waiting, the murmur of softly moving wings heralding the presence of the "Beautiful Angel," who gently led him out of his earthly mansion, just across the threshold, to the bright land beyond.

PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION OF A NEW PETREL.

BY ROBERT CUSHMAN MURPHY.

Plate II.

ON the return voyage of the recent expedition to the island of South Georgia conducted by the American Museum of Natural History and the Museum of The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and